

A
S E R M O N,

OCCASIONED BY

THE DEATH OF
MRS. PHILIPPS,

PREACHED AT

KEIGHLEY, IN YORKSHIRE,

July 11, 1784.

BY THE REV. T. *LILLIE*,
Minister at *Bingley*.

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MRS. LIPPES

LONDON

By the Rev. J. LITTLE

Minister of the Gospel

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PSALM xxiii. 4.

YEA, THOUGH I WALK THROUGH THE VALLEY OF
THE SHADOW OF DEATH, I WILL FEAR NO EVIL:
FOR THOU ART WITH ME; THY ROD AND THY
STAFF THEY COMFORT ME.

TO different persons, the present world appears
in different points of view. To some it seems
a paradise, to others a Bochim; a place of
weeping. It is true even *these* enjoy many comforts,
for which they are truly thankful, and consider them as
so many expressions of the Divine goodness to render
their journey through life so much the more easy and
comfortable. Yet many a troublesome weary step must
the christian take, while he is passing through this world
to that better one which is before him. And at last he must
of necessity enter into, and pass through the valley of the
shadow of death. A passage this which, however dark
and gloomy, yet cannot be avoided. All have entered
into it, and passed through it. But different in-
deed is the company which saints and sinners may ex-
pect while passing through it: hence the comfort of

the *first*; hence the fear and dread of the *last*.
 "Yea," saith the Psalmist, "though I walk through
 "the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no
 "evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff,
 "*they* comfort me."

THIS psalm appears to have been composed by David after that God had brought him out of some great distress. And while under the trial, whatever it was, he comforts himself with the pleasing relation in which God stood to him; that of a *shepherd*. Under the Divine pastoral care, he could rejoice even at the prospect of death itself, the most formidable of natural evils; "yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me." Which words were assigned me to be opened up, and explained on this truly melancholy occasion, by our late worthy, and much esteemed friend and relative. And they forcibly speak what she happily felt in her dying moments. Sorry we all are for the mournful Providence; nevertheless it becomes us not to find fault with the Divine procedure. Here submission is our duty.

In the illustration of the text, I propose,

- I. To point out a few causes, which happily tend to render the people of God sedate and composed, when they meet the last enemy, *death*.
- II. To illustrate the reasons particularly assigned by the Psalmist why when, "walking through
 "the

"the valley of the shadow of death, he would
 "fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and
 "thy staff, they comfort me." To these I shall,

III. Subjoin some proper improvement of the
 subject, and Providence.

I. I am to point out a few causes which happily
 operate in rendering God's people sedate and composed
 in the view of death. The description of death
 by the Psalmist is truly awful and solemn, "the val-
 "ley of the shadow of death," and yet he appears to
 be perfectly composed and serene; this is implied in
 the word "walk." He was not in a panic. To
 persons who have lively hopes of death's happy con-
 sequences to the righteous, it is stripped of its gloom.
 A shadow hath nothing in it which can hurt us. In-
 deed it may terrify those who take it for a substance;
 but it can occasion no uneasy emotions to those who
 perfectly understand what it is. Thus under near
 prospects of their dissolution, good men, real be-
 lievers in Christ, through the actings of faith, love
 and hope, may be, and blessed be God often are, se-
 date and composed, nay, sometimes even filled with
 "joy unspeakable and full of glory."

YET I am far from saying that this is *always* the
 case; no, far from it. There are many valuable chris-
 tians whose fun sets in a cloud. Satan, knowing that
 it is the last time, will be more than commonly busy
 in disturbing the peace of the christian: the remem-
 brance of the sins of whose youth too, may create

great uneasiness in his mind.—Besides, as in life much of the distress of christians is to be ascribed to the temperament of the body, so may it be at death. But in the general it will be found, that if believers on a dying bed cannot rejoice and triumph, though many of them have expressed the highest joy even then, yet they are born up by means of their *hope* in the precious promises of the gospel, and in *him* who is the sum and substance of them. *Hope* is that anchor which they then generally lay hold on; and which bears them up above the surges of this stormy and tempestuous sea.

BUT let me particularly point out what these things are which tend to render believers sedate and composed, and which sometimes even fill them with joy, when they are meeting the last enemy, *death*. And here let me

First, Take notice of those endearing *relations* which subsist between the blessed God and them.

RELATIONSHIP among men, whether by the ties of nature; friendship, or grace, hath a happy tendency to promote courage and confidence, in the person on whom we depend, for assistance in every difficult emergency. In a particular manner the *filial* relation imboldens the child with the highest degree of confidence, to commit himself to the care and affection of his much beloved parents. But is not the all-wise, the all-gracious God the *father* of his people by regeneration and adoption? Besides, will not the wife esteem herself happy in being under the care and protection of the man

man who loves, values, and even doats on her?—her *husband*. Now this very endearing relation too, God is pleased to bear in reference to his saints, * “ thy maker is thy husband. ” The same comfortable relation doth the Divine Redeemer bear to all who love and obey him ; many proofs of this we find in the Song of Songs. To the same purpose speaks the apostle Paul ; † “ for I am jealous over you with “ godly jealousy ; for I have espoused you to one “ *husband*, that I may present you as a chaste virgin “ to Christ. ”

FARTHER, God is the *friend* of his people ; a friend who will abide by them, and show himself friendly, when all other friends can be but of small service. Christ too supports the same endearing character ; ‡ “ ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command “ you. Henceforth I call you not servants ; for the “ servant knoweth not what his lord doeth ; But I “ call you *friends*.

MOREOVER, God is their *shepherd* ; so he is stiled in the text, and in many other places. The Redeemer sustains the same happy character ; he is the great and good shepherd ; the chief shepherd of the flock. Is he not also considered as the *captain* of salvation ? whose power can check and control, and whose wisdom can easily defeat, all the cunning and policy of their most formidable adversaries. And do the blessed God and the Redeemer stand in such, and in various other endearing relations to the saints ? Then in the midst of the greatest dangers they

* Isa. liv. 5. † 2 Cor. xi. 2. ‡ John xv. 14, 15.

they may take courage : Especially, “ when walking
 “ through the valley of the shadow of death. ” A con-
 sideration of these comfortable relations may well in-
 fuse comfort, which sometimes may break out in trans-
 ports of joy :—‘ And is God my father, my friend,
 ‘ my shepherd ? then, O my soul, mayest thou not with
 ‘ comfort rely on these and other endearing relations
 ‘ which he bears towards his saints ?—Mayest not
 ‘ thou hope that he will stand by a poor child of his,
 ‘ who humbly claims a right to his protection and fa-
 ‘ vor, from this endearing relation ?—Will an earthly
 ‘ parent stand at a distance when he observes his
 ‘ weak and helpless child in danger ? Will he not ra-
 ‘ ther fly to his relief ? Rejoice then, O my soul, in
 ‘ this tender relation which thy God sustains towards
 ‘ thee. It carries in it the best support under every
 ‘ trial ; a comfort, infinitely superior to what the most
 ‘ tenderly beloved child can expect from the most in-
 ‘ dulent earthly parent. ” Unquestionably it doth.
 * “ Wait then on the Lord : be of good courage, and
 “ he shall strengthen thine heart ; wait I say on the
 “ Lord. ”

Secondly, A serious review of the christian’s for-
 mer *self-dedications* to God in Christ, may well inspire
 him with hope and comfort, “ when walking through
 “ the valley of the shadow of death. ”

THIS, I apprehend, is another happy cause of real
 and solid comfort, peace, and composure in the souls
 of

of dying faints. Often, while in the enjoyment of health and strength, have they committed themselves, soul and body, to his tender love and parental pity, by the most solemn engagements, through the Lord Jesus Christ. They have, many of them at least, laid themselves under the most binding ties to be his, *only* his, and to walk in his ways, at the Lord's table. They have repeatedly *there* avouched the Lord to be *their* God. In the most solemn manner, they have *there* acknowledged him to be their father, their friend, their everlasting portion ; and themselves his children and his servants :—*there* they have solemnly professed that they will abide by his service, and adhere to their engagements in spite, and in the face of every danger ; *there* in the most public manner they have in effect said, with Israel's victorious General, * “ but as for “ me and my house, we will serve the Lord. ”

Often too in private have they resigned and given up themselves to God : when secluded from every eye but *his* who tries the heart and reins ; and have not only by actions, but in *words* it may be, subscribed with their hands, and said that they are the Lord's : from these solemn engagements, they are comforted in the thought, that they are his *right* and *property*. And say, will not a serious review of such solemn, chearful self-dedication, promote comfort and peace within, and preclude fear, in every distressing hour ? Especially in a dying hour ? They do not *then* com-
mit.

* Josh. xxiv. 15.

mit their departing spirits into the hand of an unknown God ; ah no ; but into the hand of that God, whom they have again and again avouched to be *their* God, their father, and their portion.

‘ I HOPE, O my God, I can with the greatest integrity appeal to thine all-observing eye, that I have again, and again, given up myself, my *whole* self, soul and body, into thy hands, as into the hands of a faithful Creator, and a merciful Redeemer. I adore the riches of thy grace, that I can with a good conscience, say, that I have in the name of my Lord Jesus Christ, resigned, and made an universal surrender of myself to thee in an everlasting covenant that shall not be forgotten. I trust that I have resigned myself to thee, to be justified through the merits, and sanctified by the spirit of thy dear Son, my strength and righteousness ; to be ruled by thy word ; to be disposed of by thy providence ; to be used by thee in such a way as may best advance the purposes of thy glory, and my own eternal felicity.—And, now in my departing moments, in this important hour, may I not be encouraged, O my God, from those solemn transactions, that have passed between my soul and thee, to depend on thy rich promises and grace ? I humbly trust, that, in my present most needful and trying hour, thou wilt be graciously pleased to stand by thy poor dying servant. Whither can I go for comfort in such an hour, but to thee, my God in covenant, whom I have served (oh that I could say
‘ with

“with greater fidelity,) and to whom I have, in former times, solemnly devoted myself? O be pleased now to send prosperity. Say to my soul, that thou art become her salvation.—Blessed be thy name; I hope that I find thee near me, speaking peace and comfort.’ * “*Though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.*”—But though a consideration of the christian’s former self-dedications may not raise him to such a pitch of joy and triumph, which sometimes however has been the case, nevertheless it will have a happy influence on his inward composure and serenity. Let me add,

Thirdly, That a happy experience of God’s loving kindness, and merciful dealings towards his people, in former times of trial, may well be supposed to promote their peace and comfort, when they are “walking through the valley of the shadow of death.”

FROM the tried constancy of our friend in former times of danger, we are encouraged to hope for the continuance, and exertion of his favor, in future similar scenes. If this be what may be expected from human friendship; much more may ~~it~~ be depended on, in reference to the divine. But saints have found their God in preceding occasions; a very “present help in time of trouble:” when they have been ready to

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* Isa. xii. 1.

say, "our foot slippeth," *his* mercy hath held them up. Often on their being brought low, he hath helped them. He hath put off their sackcloth, and girded them with gladness. The time of their extremity, hath been the time of his speedy deliverance. "In the mount of the Lord it hath been seen." With peculiar pleasure they can look back to former merciful appearances in their favor, and can set up their Ebenezer and say, * "hitherto the Lord hath helped us." And surely a consideration of this, can scarce fail to encourage them, that, in every coming difficulty, he will graciously still appear in their favor, and will put underneath them his everlasting arms. When did they ever find his ear heavy, or his hand shortened? He hath delivered them "out of six, yea out of seven troubles." And may they not hope that he will yet appear, to their unspeakable comfort, as their friend and their helper; especially in an hour, when all other friends and helpers must stand afar off? If when they have, in former times been pressed out of measure, above strength, inso-much that they have dispaired of a happy issue, their God hath yet appeared for them and girded them with joy; surely now that they stand in the greatest need of his powerful arm, and pitying eye, they may comfortably hope, that he will not be, † "as a way-faring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night." They may humbly hope, that when walking all alone, through this dark and dreary valley, he will stand by them, and say to them, ‡ "my grace is sufficient
 " for

* 1 Sam. vii. 12.

† Jer. xiv. 8.

‡ 2 Cor. xii. 9.

“ for thee : for my strength is made perfect in weakness. ” They now stand in the greatest need of comfort, and let them hope, “ that as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord will pity them who fear him. ” Especially they may *thus* hope, when his *faithfulness* is attended to. Can the everfaithful Jehovah be thought to forget those promises which he hath made to his people ? Ah, no ; for, * “ can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb ? ” (for such monsters in nature there have been found, though but seldom,) “ yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, ” attend to it with joy and admiration, “ I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands ; thy walls are continually before me. ” God’s faithfulness to his saints is a pillar which shall stand *unshaken*, when earth’s foundations are laid in ruins. I add with pleasure,

Fourthly, That this consideration, namely, that death will deliver God’s people from all their present trials and temptations, and from all imperfections in his service ; while it will introduce them into the best place, company, and enjoyments, may happily tend to support and bear them up when “ walking through the valley of the shadow of death. ”

By dear bought experience we all must know, what various trials and sorrows befall us during our present state

state. We have trials which are properly *personal*; others, which may be termed *social*, *relative*, and *sympathetic*; i. e. which arise from endeared connections with others; and *these* not seldom overbalance *those*. It may be with great propriety said of all the redeemed of the Lord, "these are they who come out of "great tribulations." But as one well notes, 'when 'we see and observe others in the furnace of affliction, 'and are ourselves in it, it is a pleasing reflection to 'think, that an end, an everlasting period shall soon be 'put to the whole.' Yes, christians, there is a state of perfect and complete felicity awaiting us. Death opens the passage, or if you will, is *itself* the passage, the entrance, to this glorious state. It must indeed be passed, yet having passed it, we shall enter into a happy and blessed world, where God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes. The believing views of this must happily tend to bear up the dying faint: the hope of this will powerfully support him, either, when at some little distance from, or, when walking through, this valley. None in that happy world are heard to cry out with the Shunamite's son; § "my head, my "head!" Or, with the sympathizing Prophet; || "my "bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; "my heart maketh a noise in me: I cannot hold my "peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the "sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war." And it is no small part of their happiness, that they shall never more have any frightful views of the king of terrors.

They

They have felt his sting, and shall fear it no more for ever.

BESIDES, all temptations to sin from every quarter, whether from the world, the flesh, or the devil, are at an everlasting distance. No crooked serpent shall ever be found there. * “ No lion shall be there, nor “ any ravenous beast shall go up thereon ; it shall not “ be found there : but the redeemed shall walk there. ” In that blessed world no such melancholy cry as this shall ever be heard ; † “ O wretched man that I am ! “ who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? ”

BLESSED world ! in *thee* there is nothing either to be feared from *without*, or to be lamented over from *within* ! Surely a consideration of this may well support the believing soul, when walking through this valley ; and *will*, when *faith* is lively and strong.

MOREOVER, death will liberate all God's people from every imperfection in his service. A deep sense of their imperfections in his service here, hath often given believers much acute inward pain. Alas ! though engaged in the most important services, in the service of their best friend and benefactor, yet how often have their roving, wandering hearts, like the fool's eyes, been in the ends of the earth ! This to all serious souls is a lamentation, and will be for a lamentation. Happy world, where there shall be no interruption, no distraction in the service of God and of the Lamb ! *There* his people shall serve him, shall *indeed* serve him with the utmost

* Isa. xxxv. 9. † Rom. vii. xxiv

most chearfulness and vigor. *There* every harp shall be continually strung; every mouth praise; every heart filled with gratitude: and *holiness* to the Lord shall be legibly wrote on the whole. Say, christian, is not the thought delightful? is it not animating and reviving? *There*, in that blessed world, † “shall be
 “no curse; but the throne of God, and of the Lamb
 “shall be in it:” it is added with peculiar emphasis,
 “and his servants shall serve him!” They shall serve him not any longer in a cold, languid, insipid manner; no; but with the utmost animation and vigor of soul.

BESIDES, death will convey all good men to the best *place*, to the best *company*, and to the best *employment*. It translates them to the best place; the city of the living God, the city of the King of Kings; the new Jerusalem;—in which there is the best company:—There God discovers himself to his saints in the most transporting manner. There they are with Christ: they behold his glory, and are supremely happy in the sight. There they join the general assembly and church of the First Born. There they unite with angels and arch-angels, and with all the redeemed from among men:—a society made up of holy and pure souls; among whom there is no jealousy, no distrust. All are holy, good, wise, and happy. Hence the felicity of each, heightens and advances that of the whole. Blessed society! may we all in due time join our humble notes of praise with you to God and the Lamb! Then we shall no longer hang our harps upon the wil-
 lows,

lows, as here; or sing the songs of Zion in a strange land! For how exalted and sublime is their *employment*! Darkness here, it is true, veils and covers our conceptions.—Praise and contemplation will, no doubt, constitute part of their work. But it becomes us to say, that, at present, we know but little of it. || “For we now see “through a glass darkly; but then face to face.” Thanks be to the *Father of Lights* for the *little* we know of it: when he shall be pleased to bring us thither, we shall know the whole; “we shall know even “as we are known.”

To the preceding, let us add the pleasing and animating hopes of the glorious resurrection body: a body made like to Christ's glorious body: a body no longer to resemble a tabernacle soon to be taken down; soon to fall in peices: no; but a spiritual building, not made with hands, to stand for ever: a body capable of subsisting without animal support; food, sleep, and phyfic; not any more to dread the fatal shafts of death, and its consequences; worms, rottenness and corruption. This glorious body shall be reanimated by the more glorious and exalted spirit; a separation shall then take place no more: the *whole* man shall be for ever with the Lord. Wherefore, while in this valley of tears, may we comfort ourselves, and one another, with these words;—and when we come to “walk “through the valley of the shadow of death,” may the blessed God grant, that the hopes of this felicity may be strong, lively, and animating!

I OBSERVE

I OBSERVE once more,

Fifthly, That a consciousness of the *integrity* of their conduct, both towards God and man, must afford real peace and comfort to christians, when “ walking “ through the valley of the shadow of death. ”

At all times and seasons, especially in times of trial, it must afford a good man peculiar satisfaction to reflect on his sincerity. Frequently it happens, that nothing except a happy *consciousness* of this, can support him under the illiberal reflections of the world. In the nature of things, it must afford singular comfort to the real saint to think, that he hath not *wholly* lived to himself, but hath had the good, both present and future, of others in view. To hope that, through the blessing of God, he hath been some way useful and serviceable to the best interests of his fellow-men and christians, by his prayers, counsels, and example, cannot but yield him real and solid pleasure. It is true, he with sorrow observes many imperfections in his best services, both toward God and man. His *sincerity* itself, like his other graces, needs to have spread over it the *mantle* of love. Hence he looks for * “ acceptance in “ the beloved. ” Hence too, while † “ he doth justice “ and loves mercy, he will yet walk *humbly* with his “ God. ” He boasts of nothing, he places his trust in nothing in regard to his future happiness, but in the pardoning mercy of God through Christ. Yet from what he hath been, through grace, helped to do, he can gather *evidences* of his sincerity and uprightness.

And

* Eph. i. 6.

† Micah vi. 8.

And from the *promises* of God to all persons of such and such a character, he can look with comfort to another world, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Surely the Apostle received singular comfort from this reflection, that he had been the happy instrument of much good to the Thessalonians. * “ For what is “ our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing ? Are not “ even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at “ his coming ? For ye are our glory and our joy.” Where there is no consciousness of *integrity* of conduct, there can be no rejoicing either in life, or at death. † “ For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not “ with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we “ have had our conversation in the world.” And surely this solid ground of comfort will not leave the christian at his death. It did not leave this good man faint Paul. By reflecting on the sincerity of his labors and sufferings for Christ, and his church, he breaks out, at the near prospect of his dissolution, in these triumphant words ; ‡ “ I have fought a good fight, I have “ finished my course, I have kept the faith :—hence- “ forth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, “ which the Lord the righteous Judge, shall give me “ at that day : and not to me only, but unto all them “ also that love his appearing.” Nor is this rejoicing confined to the Apostle ; other good men have likewise joined him in this, even under the near prospect of death. A consciousness of their *sincerity* hath *then*

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afforded

* 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20.

† 2 Cor. i. 12.

‡ 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

afforded them much inward comfort ; not indeed as the *cause*, but as the *evidence* of their future felicity. Thus while the “ backslider in heart shall be filled “ with his own ways, a good man shall be satisfied “ from himself.”

REAL saints then may be supported under the near prospects of death, from such like considerations.— A sense of those endearing relations which subsist between God and them :—a review of their former self-dedications to him :—the comfortable experience of his loving kindness towards them in former times of trial :—a consideration that death will put an everlasting period to all their sorrows and temptations, to all their imperfections in the service of their God, while it will introduce them into the best place, company, and employment ;—and a consciousness of the integrity of their conduct both toward God and man. Let me proceed to illustrate,

II. The reasons assigned by the Psalmist, why, when saints are walking through the valley of the shadow of death, they need fear no evil. “ For thou art “ with me : thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.”

THE reasons here pointed out are two : 1st. God’s gracious presence with them. “ for thou art with “ me.” 2ly. “ thy rod and thy staff they comfort “ me.”

1st. God’s gracious presence with his people is certainly a good reason, why they need fear no evil.

For

For *thou* art with me. Here it will be necessary to attend unto the character which the Psalmist gives us of God ; and that is, of a *shepherd*. A very endearing one indeed. The blessed God is here represented as a shepherd, tending and waiting on his poor sheep, when passing through this dark valley. A great many other engaging characters of God might be here mentioned, as conducing to bring his dying saints to fear no evil, during this dreary passage. But I shall confine myself to this single one taken notice of in the text and context, that of a *shepherd*. “ For thou art “ with me.” It is true, that God is *ever* present with all his creatures. *Darkness* cannot be a vail to conceal us from his eye, nor *distance* a screen to place us out of the reach of his power. * “ Whither shall I “ go from thy Spirit ? or whither shall I flee from “ thy presence ?” Implying that it was impossible for him to outrun the divine presence, or shelter himself from the divine eye. But, nevertheless, he is with his people by way of *special* presence. And in proportion to their necessities, and to a distrust of themselves, they may expect the more of his gracious help. When they are *weak*, then are they *strong*. But in their dying moments, their *need* of the divine pity and compassion is inconceivably greater than ever it was before. By virtue then of that animating promise, † “ as thy “ day is, so shall thy strength be ;” they may hope, that he will be so much *nearer* to them, by the consolations of his spirit and grace, by how much the

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greater

* Psa. cxxxix. 7. † Deut. xxxiii. 25.

greater need they stand of them. When passing therefore through this valley, they may look up to their gracious God, through a Redeemer, as their shepherd, and fear no evil. For no material hurt shall befall their better part. Though their *mortal* part drops, and falls at the end of this valley, their *immortal* spirit shall wing its way under the convoy of some guardian angel, to the regions of eternal day. "I will fear no evil for thou art with me."

First, I will fear no evil for thou art with me, as my shepherd, to *guide* and *conduct* me in safety, while in this dreary valley.

It is the part of a good shepherd to guide and lead his flock in safety. Our blessed Lord assures us, that he acts such a part towards his flock. * He goes *before* them, as their *guide* and conductor, while they *follow* him. God will be the conducting and leading shepherd of his people in every stage of their journey heaven-ward; and especially will *verify* this happy relation and character in their departing moments.

"FOR thou art with me;" "Thou art with me as my shepherd to guide and lead me. It is a deep and dark valley. Though it hath been trodden by thousands of thy sheep, yet not before by me; but since I am now entering into it, may I not hope that thou wilt be my guide? Every step of it is thoroughly known to thee. Leave me not; be at my right hand. There may I observe and find thee, leading,

* Vide John x. 4.

‘ leading, supporting, and guiding one of thy poor
 ‘ weak, dying sheep, while in this hazardous valley.’

WHEN thou shalt be in the condition represented, christian, and shalt pour out such a prayer before thy God, may he hear and answer thee to the joy of thine heart! Hope that he will; * “ for the Lord is near
 “ to all them that call upon him, that call upon him
 “ in truth.” Bear up therefore, and fear no evil. God is thy *conducting* shepherd. Dark and deep as this valley is, yet God will be with thee while in it. The divine Redeemer also, sustains this amiable and endearing character. He is the great and good shepherd, who gave his life for the flock. And having given his life for the flock, will he not lead and guide them while in this valley? Will not *he* then lead them, who hath been their *conductor* all the way thither? Can it be thought that he will *then* forsake them; that he will no longer be their guide? What? though they *then* stand most in need of his guardian care, and pastoral conduct? Reject the thought with abhorrence. For where then would be his *faithfulness*? Hope then in him, christian, that he, who hath been thy shepherd hitherto, will sustain the happy character still. He will conduct thee in perfect safety to his green and rich pastures in the heavenly Canaan. There thou shalt be led beside the still waters; and drink full draughts of bliss. I will fear no evil,

Secondly, For thou art with me, as my powerful
 shepherd

* Psa, cxlv. 18.

shepherd, to *protect* and *defend* me, from all those enemies to which I am then peculiarly exposed.

It belongs to a good shepherd to protect his flock from beasts and birds of prey. Thus did Jacob. — * “ In the day the drought consumed me,” says he to Laban, “ and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes.” Much more certainly will God, the shepherd of Israel, who dwelleth between the cherubims, protect and defend the sheep of his pasture. They are his sheep; *his* by ~~their~~ own choice and designation, as well as by their own chearful self-surrender and dedication. Since then they are *thus* his, he will protect and defend them in times of danger. They are his *property* his *possession*; and if men will be solicitous to defend their property, can it be imagined that God will not preserve *his*? † “ The hireling fleeth, “ because he is an hireling, and careth not for the “ sheep.” Hence on the appearance of danger, he leaveth the sheep and fleeth. Thus the wolf either catcheth or scattereth them. Not so will the shepherd of Israel act, when dangers appear, and threaten to scatter and slay his sheep. No; he will be then their guardian, their wall and bulwark of protection.

At all times, and in an especial manner, when meeting the *King of Terrors*, God will appear to be their defender. When walking through death’s dark shades, they are exposed to great and formidable enemies. The roaring lion, who goeth about, seeking whom he can
tear

* Gen. xxxi. 40. † John x. 12.

fear and devour, will then, in all the rage of his fury, set upon them. A sense of the *nature* and *number* of their sins, may also oppress them. The valley itself is dark and deep, surrounded, as it were, with howling and ravening wolves. But God is with them; the Redeemer is with them as their guardian shepherd. His arm will defend and protect them; and, who, they may cheerfully hope, by the operations of his spirit, will represent to their faith, the infinite efficacy of his death and merits to pardon, and cleanse them from all their sins and pollutions. Though their spiritual enemies may beset them, and threaten their ruin, yet they shall not prevail, "they may take council together, but, it shall come to nought; they may speak, the word, but it shall not stand; for God, their powerful shepherd, is with them." Happy flock! even when passing through this dark valley, their shepherd will protect and defend them. He will make them "strong in the Lord and in the power of his might." Though heart and flesh fail; yet God will be the strength of their heart and their portion for ever. O for a *lively* faith of this in our dying moments! Then we shall say, I will fear no evil.

Thirdly, "I will fear no evil, for *thou* art with me" as my *wakeful* and *watchful* shepherd, to take a kind and gracious notice of me in such a critical moment.

It is the duty of shepherds to be wakeful and watchful about their flocks; to watch over them sometimes

times even under night, to the end that they may protect them from savage beasts, and the hands of violent men. Thus employed were those † highly favored shepherds, to whom the most important and joyful tidings were made, that ever gladdened the human ear, or rejoiced the human heart. Such a shepherd, yea infinitely more than such, is God, the shepherd of his people, whose "eyes neither slumber nor sleep." His eye is ever over them for good, and his ear is ever open to their cry. And from a consideration of his goodness, mercy and faithfulness, we may comfortably conclude, that in proportion to the dangers which threaten us, he will be so much the more graciously near to us. But when "walking through the valley of the shadow of death," his people stand in the greatest need of his supporting hand and watchful eye. For of all trying and important seasons, *that* is the most important. Now if his care over them was ever unremitted in *former* times, can we think that it will be less so *then*? no, surely; but rather more *intense* than ever. For then their dearest and nearest friends and relatives can afford them but little help. With streaming and flowing eyes, with bleeding and aching hearts, they observe the cruel and deadly foe making long and hasty strides towards them, and just ready to strike the last blow; they lift up their most ardent prayers to Heaven for them: but their arm is too weak to ward off the insulting enemy. Be it so; their shepherd's watchful and wakeful eye is over them. He will not only prevent

† Vide Luke ii. 9, 10, &c.

vent that insatiable and unrelenting fiend, the roaring lion, to rend and tear them, but will keep, in spite of his malice and power, * “ that which they have committed to his care against *that day*.” He *always* watched over them. Never in any former period did he take off his eye from them. So he tells them, to their unspeakable comfort, by the Prophet. † “ I the Lord do keep it: I will water it every moment; “ left any should hurt it, I will keep it night and day.” i. e. continually. And will he relax his watchful care over them when they are grappling, and contending with their last and most formidable enemy? surely he will not.—‘ Come then, O my soul, and take comfort. It is a dark and frightful valley, it is true; pass through it thou must:’ “ for it is appointed unto all men once to die” ‘ But for thy comfort, think on the watchful and unremitting care of thy shepherd about thee, and thine eternal interests. Thou and they are in the *best* hand possible; in *that* hand which binds fate, which upholds nature, which can bruise satan under thy feet, and guard thee against his fiery darts; even *then* when he would with the greatest violence throw them against thee. Thou art under the kind notice of that eye which can espy and discern from afar all the plots and contrivances, however secret, of this thy unrelenting foe. Hope then therefore in him; for mercy is with him, and fear no evil.’ —Happy doth the child think himself, when under the eye and notice of his parents. Much more happy is

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thy

* 2 Tim. i. 12.

† Isa. xxvii. 3.

thy condition, christian, since thou wast ever under, and when passing through this gloomy valley shalt in a *particular* manner be under, the *watchful* eye of thy adorable shepherd.

Fourthly, “ I will fear no evil, for thou art with me,” as my *compassionate, tender* and *pitying* shepherd, to *support* and comfort me,

A good shepherd hath a tender regard for his flock; especially for the weak and feeble among them. God is *such* a shepherd; the Lord Jesus Christ is *such* a shepherd. For this purpose, hear what is predicted of him by the Prophet. † “ He shall feed his flock like “ a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs in his arms, “ and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those “ that are with young.”

As a shepherd will be peculiarly careful not to *overdrive* his flock, * (such a one was Jacob); and will take up now one and then another, of the weak and tender lambs in his arms,—and will nourish them, as it were, in his bosom; even with such tenderness, with such lenity and gentleness, and more than such, will the Lord Jesus Christ, the shepherd of his flock, lead and conduct it. Hence with the greatest propriety he styles himself the † good shepherd. He is indeed the kind, the tender, and good shepherd; who will uniformly attend to the precious interests of his people. And must he not be the good shepherd, since he gave his life for the flock? And laying down his invaluable

† Isa. xl. 11.

* Vide Gen. xxxiii. 13.

† Vide John x. 11.

ble life for them, will he not pity and compassionate them in every hour of distress ; and in a more especial manner, when “ walking through the valley of the shadow of death ?” Comfortable and memorable are these words of the Apostle concerning him. † “ For “ in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he “ is able to *succor* them that are tempted.” He himself hath passed through this gloomy valley, single and alone ; “ for of the people there was none with him ;” and when walking through it felt the fiery darts of Satan, that crooked serpent. For it is said, § after his temptations in the wilderness were ended, that the devil departed from him for a season. The devil then departed from him fully determined, no doubt, to set upon him again to greater advantage ; secretly meditating some future assault. Now no time could be so proper and convenient for this intended temptation, as when he was to “ walk through the valley of the shadow of death,” hung round with every horror. He therefore will not only be ready to assist his dying servants, from his own innate infinite goodness and pity ; but also from the *remembrance* of what he himself once suffered. And such is his tenderness and pity, that he hath brought now one, and then another of his flock, that were naturally of a timid and fearful disposition, to discover in their *last* moments, such christian *firmness* and *fortitude*, as hath much surprised, and greatly rejoiced the beholders. * One I knew of this temper,

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who

† Heb. ii. 18. § Vide Luke iv. 13.

* THE late MRS. HOLLINGS of Cottingley ; the widow of my much esteemed

who was particularly *thus* favored. Trust in him, O ye his faints, for the accomplishment of his gracious promise, in your favor, to his distressed and tempted Apostle. † “ My grace is sufficient for thee ; for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” Once more,

Fifthly, “ I will fear no evil,” for thou art with me as my shepherd, not only to attend me while *in*, but safely to *convey me quite through* this valley, and to place me in Canaan’s happy pastures.

It is *this* which crowns the whole! What comfort, what solid comfort may this thought afford to the dying saint ! His shepherd will not only be with him while walking *in*, but will safely *convey* and *lead* him *through* this dark valley, into the regions of everlasting day.

† 2 Cor. xii. 9.

teemed friend Mr. Joseph Hollings. A person, in whose company you scarcely ever could be, but from whom, if not your own fault, you must have received advantage. They both were eminent christians; and lovers of all good men. Their house was ever open to ministers of every denomination. Their exalted and unfeigned piety, and extensive charity, endeared them to all who knew them; especially to the village in which they lived. By whose death the poor of the neighbourhood, and that society of christians with whom they were closely united, and with whom they regularly worshipped, have sustained an irreparable loss.

They were,

O, et præsidium, et dulce decus meum.

———Animæ, quales neque candidiores

Terra tulit; neque quis me sit DEVINCTOR ALTER,

HOR.

So fair an opportunity presenting itself, the Author, from the warm and cordial friendship which had long subsisted between these two worthy persons and him, and from the indisputable testimonies they were pleased to give him of their regard, thinks himself peculiarly obliged to offer this small tribute of gratitude to their memory.

day. He will not leave him, but will perform whatever he hath promised to him. God hath spoken *good* concerning his Israel ; his sheep. Great and good things he hath indeed spoken concerning them. These he will bestow ; not *one* good thing which the Lord hath said concerning them shall fail. Much comfort must it therefore afford them, since he hath promised *never* to * *leave* or forsake them. For when absent from the body, they shall be present with the Lord. They shall be with Christ which is far better. They shall join the general assembly and church of the first-born ; shall be united to the blessed society of glorified saints, and glorious angels. They shall mingle interests and praises with the first-born sons of Heaven. Transporting, animating consideration ! “ Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord : they shall “ rest from their labors ; and their works shall follow “ them.” They shall forget their sorrows, cares, and temptations. *These* they shall lay down in the grave, never, never more to take them up ; while their immortal spirits, freed from the cumbersome load of a frail dying body, shall be for ever with the Lord, to behold his glory, and rejoice in his salvation ; possessing the firmest *belief*, for it is more than *hope*, that in due time, soul and body shall again be united. In the mean time, in full choir with attending and surrounding angels and saints, they sing, § “ worthy is the lamb that “ was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, “ and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.”
They

They repeat the heavenly anthem, saying, "blessing, "and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that "sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever "and ever." Be of good courage then, christian, for thy shepherd will *guide* thee not only even *unto* death, the last stage of thy mortal journey, but *through* it, yea, *beyond* it, even to glory. He will conduct thee in safety to the *farther* side of this deep valley, and place thee in that happy world, where neither death, nor any of its messengers, shall ever reign; where it shall never lay its cold clay hands upon, or imprison in its silent, and melancholy abode, any of the blessed inhabitants. For none of them shall ever say, they are *sick*; the people that dwell there are forgiven their iniquities.

THUS I have illustrated the *first* reason, why the Psalmist "when walking through the valley of the shadow of death," would fear no evil. For *thou* art with me.—Thou art with me as my shepherd,—to *guide* and conduct me,—to *protect* and defend me,—to take a *kind* and gracious notice of me,—to *support* and *comfort* me,—and not only to attend me while *in*, but safely to *convey* me *through* this dark valley, and to place me in the heavenly Canaan's happy and green pastures. The

2d. Reason assigned by the Psalmist, why he would fear no evil, is, "thy rod and thy staff they "comfort me;" this seems not to require much illustration. By *rod* sometimes in scripture, as in common language

language, we are to understand *correction*. * “ Let “ him take away his *rod* from me.” The shepherd’s *rod* in those Eastern countries, was used in correcting his sheep ; which, like our domestic animals, were exceeding tame. His *staff* was employed in counting and numbering them. But here by *rod* and *staff*, perhaps, we are to understand one and the same thing ; God’s *pastoral* care and concern about the welfare of his flock. That they cannot mean *correction* is evident by attending to the very words ; *they comfort me*. By *rod* and *staff* therefore may be safely understood, God’s royal and pastoral care about his people.

BUT as by *rod*, we are sometimes to understand the *gospel* of Christ, called there † “ the rod of his strength,” or his strong and powerful rod ; so with propriety enough we may understand by it, that rich and extraordinary comfort which the promises and covenant of the gospel afford God’s saints and people. His precious promises and everlasting covenant, sealed and ratified by the Redeemer’s death, yield at all times the most exalted, and exquisite comfort to believers, and more especially when they come to die. Thus a consideration of God’s covenant made with David, afforded him the highest satisfaction in his last moments. He met with sore trials, grievous afflictions from his family, like many a good man since his day. Nevertheless, God’s covenant made with him, was his stay and staff, his support and comfort. ‡ “ Although my house “ be not so with God ; yet he hath made with me, an ever-

* Job ix. 34. Psa. ii. 9. † Vide Psa. cx. 2. ‡ Sam. xxiii. 5.

“ everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure :
 “ for this is all my salvation, and all my desire.”
 The promises of a faithful and powerful friend, when
 we are in distressing circumstances, happily tend to re-
 vive and refresh our spirits, though they have been
 much depressed. If we find this the case, how much
 more powerful must God’s precious and faithful pro-
 mises be, to rejoice our souls at all times ; and in a
 very eminent manner so, when meeting our last enemy ?
 These applied by faith to the soul, will be a *staff* indeed !
 These will be the dying christian’s prop and support.
 With *this* staff in the hand of his faith, he may walk
 through this dark valley with serenity, nay with joy
 and exultation. A consideration of that covenant,
 in which such a promise as *this* is to be found, § “ I
 “ will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their
 “ sins and iniquities will I remember no more,” can-
 not fail to afford the most *solid* comfort to the dying
 saint.

‘ I DIE’ saith the christian, ‘ but God will be with
 ‘ me. Though I go down into this Egypt, yet, blef-
 ‘ sed be his name, he hath not left me without the pro-
 ‘ mise of his presence with me there, and of his bringing
 ‘ me back again. I trust his promise. Lord, I believe,
 ‘ help thou my unbelief. I desire to rejoice in his co-
 ‘ venant which is ordered in all things, and sure. On
 ‘ this I cast anchor. On this solid rock I build my
 ‘ hope. On the death, merits, and righteousness, of
 ‘ his Son, I build my all.—Through rich mercy I trust,
 ‘ I am

‘ I am one of Christ’s sheep. And to these he hath kindly promised, that no man shall be able to pluck them out of his hand. To them he hath promised, that all-comprehensive blessing, *eternal life*. These his precious promises, are all my salvation and all my desire.’ * “ Unto him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, even his Father; to him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.” Thus do God’s precious promises and everlasting covenant made with his people in Christ, afford at all times, especially when lying on a dying bed, the highest degree of peace and comfort. Let me now

III. Attend to the improvement of the subject and Providence. By way of inference permit me to observe,

First, What infinite reason have we to be thankful to the blessed God, through his Son, for the reviving *light* of revelation !

By means of this we have ‘ his kindest thoughts’ made known to us. By this we find displayed, at *full length*, (so to say,) his tenderness to his saints, as well in *life* as in *death*; and especially what he hath prepared for them *after* death. With this in our eye, can we forbear to exclaim with the royal Psalmist, † “ Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought

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“ for

* Rev. i. 5, 6. † Psa. cxxi. 19.

“ for them that trust in thee, before the children of “ men ! ” God’s precious promises, recorded in his word, *ought* to administer, yea, and *do* administer, true comfort to his saints, whether living or dying. *These*, unlike the winter’s brooks, which you may seek for in vain in the drought of summer, are *perennial* springs of sublime joy and delight, during the whole period of our present existence. Others, when compared with the christian, are men *without hope*.——Was it not for the light of revelation, ah ! what a *dark* world would this be ! without *this* we could never grope our way through it with any degree of comfort : especially when we arrive at the last stage of life ; O what *gloom*, what *horror* then would brood in the mind ! To every good man, the gospel of Christ affords the truest comfort during life’s weary steps ; but especially when lying on a dying pillow. It *then raises* and *exalts* his hopes ; it dilates the mind with joy, and brightens and illuminates the dark valley itself. It inspires the christian with *hopes full of immortality*.

‘ BLESSED God ! how infinite are our obligations to
 ‘ thee, for such a light, for such a lamp to enlighten this
 ‘ dark vale ! Infinite are our obligations to thee, for
 ‘ thy word to be our light, while passing through this
 ‘ dark and benighted world ; and in a particular man-
 ‘ ner, to animate our souls with the reviving and trans-
 ‘ porting hopes and expectations of a better, while we
 “ walk through the valley of the shadow of death.”

Thanks

Thanks be to God, that thus, § “ through patience
“ and comfort of the scriptures, we have hope.” Yes,
brethren, by their means we have hope, when all crea-
ted comforts lose their taste, and appear insipid and
vain.

Secondly, What a dreadful thing must *sin* be,
which renders death so alarming and frightful to
mankind !

It is sin which has dug this valley ; which hath dug
it deep, and clothed it with all its terrors ; which hath
lined it with every thing frightful to humanity. From
the fear and dread of death, so natural to mankind, we
may learn to take our measures of sin. It is *this* which
hath introduced death into our world ; once a dwel-
ling fit for *innocence* itself to reside in. Let us learn
the evil and deadly nature of sin, from the *repeated*
triumphs of the pale horse and ~~the~~ ^{his} rider. Let us look
into the silent mansions of the dead, and see *there*, writ-
ten in the most *legible* characters, what an *apollyon* sin
is : in every shape resembling its cursed father the de-
vil. Let a consideration of death, O sinner, preach
in the most pathetic manner, the destructive nature,
the infinite evil of sin. To think on death when
tempted to sin, will surely be a powerful *monitor* with
thee to comply with the wise man’s advice.— || “ En-
“ ter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in
“ the way of evil men : avoid it, pass not by it ; turn
“ from it, and pass away.”

F 2

Thirdly,

Thirdly, How infinite are our obligations to the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by dying, hath perfumed the grave to all his people !

By his death and burial he hath made the grave a bed of *rest* to all his saints. To this sense we may, with propriety, accommodate here the Prophet's words. * " He shall enter into peace : they shall rest in their " beds, each one walking in his uprightness." Christ by dying hath plucked out the sting, and sucked out the poison, from this universal destroyer. For, † " O death, he" *already* hath been, he *farther* yet " will be, thy plague ; O grave, he" hath been, he yet " will be, " thy destruction ; and repentance shall be hid from his eyes." ' Gracious Redeemer, how infinitely obliging ' was thy love, thus to encounter death in all its most ' hideous forms, that thy saints and people might, while ' they walk through ~~this~~ dark valley, yet find comfort ' and refreshment ! may thy memory be ever precious to ' them ! may their hearts to thee ever be warmed ' with the highest glow of love and gratitude ! may ' they *live*, as well as *speak*, thy praise !'

Fourthly, We may learn the importance of religion, that death, so terrible in itself to humanity, may wear a happy aspect.

THERE is nothing which can remove gloom and horror from the grave, but an interest in the precious promises of the gospel, in the favor of God ; and a resemblance

* Isa. lvii, 2, † Vide Hosea xiii. 14.

semblance to him and the Redeemer. But if we are thoughtless and giddy, dissipated and vain, idling and trifling in regard to religion, is it possible, I refer it to your own consciences, that we can have an interest in the promises of the gospel ; in Christ, the sum and substance of these promises, or in the favor of God ; the chief and supreme felicity of man ? Whatever thoughts we *now* may entertain of real and vital religion, we may depend upon it, the time is approaching, it may be it is just at hand, when it will appear to be, as indeed it is, of all *needful* things, the most *necessary*. It is only an interest in the favor of God, a likeness to Christ, a *god-like* temper and life, which can render either the *thoughts* of death, or a *dying* bed, easy and comfortable.—If so, then to delay and postpone religion to an *uncertain* hereafter, is one of the most *absurd* and *bazardous* things possible. * “ For what is our “ life ? is it not even as a vapor that appeareth for a “ little time and then vanisheth away ? ” “ Behold, *now* “ is the accepted time ; behold, *now* is the day of sal- “ vation.” A death-bed repentance is a *rare* thing ; I will not say an *impossible* thing ; but it is much seldomer obtained than is commonly imagined. We have but *one* instance of this,—the thief on the cross, left us on record in all the scripture. But there were peculiar circumstances attending his death, which can never more return. How often have we seen some who, when death was in their apprehension just before them, formed the best resolutions ; and yet beyond all expectation

* James iv. 14.

expectation, through the divine goodness, having recovered, they have made haste to redeem the time they had lost, by "running to the same excess of riot;" perhaps, with greater greediness than ever! Their goodness, like Israel's, was like the morning cloud, or early dew. Let us therefore, in the time of health, learn to cultivate religion. Let us labor after, and plead for, that repentance, which *needeth* not to be *repented* of. Let us, in the strength of divine grace, resign ourselves to God in Christ. For it is *only* religion, *seated* in the heart, and *practised* in the life, which can bear us up, with any degree of comfort and hope, at the hour of our dismissal from a state of trial and probation, to a state of final retribution. Hence

2ly. Let me improve the text by way of trial and examination.

CAN we hope, that the Lord is our shepherd, and that we are his sheep? doth their *character*, think we, belong to us? and what their character is, our blessed Lord tells us when he says, * "my sheep hear "my voice; and I know them, and they follow "me." They hear his voice; hear it in his word, in his ordinances, and providence. They hear it so as to obey it. Their duty, as it is described in his word, they heartily wish to comply with; be it ever so disgusting and contrary to flesh and blood. Hence they *follow* him and become his disciples, they resign themselves to his government, and submit to his conduct.

* John x. 27.

duct.—They follow him as their *pattern*, their unerring *example*. They follow his commands, as a soldier doth the orders of his general ; as a patient his physician's prescriptions ; as a dutiful child his father's instructions.—Their obedience is not *forced*, but chearful. They are made his *willing* people. They consider his service as perfect freedom, as their truest honor, interest, and happiness.—They love and affect one another's company.—† “ My goodness extendeth not to thee ; “ but to the faints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in *whom is all my delight*.” They love his *pastures*, his word and ordinances : these are their meat and drink ; their *song* in the house of their pilgrimage.—They wish to be really useful, in their respective stations to one another ; not to “ look every man “ on his own things, but every man also on the things “ of others.” Thus the same mind is in them, which also was in Christ ; who pleased not himself.—They are patient under the rod. It is their hearty prayer ever to adopt Eli's words, ‡ “ It is the Lord ; let him “ do what seemeth him good.” In imitation of their divine Master, they would ever wish to say, ‘ Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except ‘ I drink it, thy will be done.’ “ If thou be willing, “ remove this cup from me : nevertheless, not my “ will, but thine be done.”—Such are some of the outlines of the characters, belonging to Christ's sheep. But the grand question returns, *do they belong to us ?* Do we indeed hear his voice ? that is, *follow* and *obey* his

† Psa. xvi. 2, 3.

‡ 1 Sam. iii. 18.

his commands and walk in his steps? Is our obedience *free* and *cheerful*? do we heartily *love all* without exception, who bear Christ's image, whether their opinions and ours coincide or not? Do we like and affect their company, while we have an aversion to that, "of certain lewd fellows of the baser sort?" Are we glad when our brethren call upon us, saying, "come and let us go up to the house of the Lord?"—Do we take a peculiar pleasure in his *pastures*; his *word* and *ordinances*? Do we wish, and endeavor to be some way *useful* to our fellow men and christians? Are we desirous to give glory to the Lord our God, when he corrects and chastises us, by a humble and submissive deportment? if this be so, how happy are we! we are Christ's sheep. And being his sheep, we may draw this comfortable inference, that "he knoweth us;" i. e. loves us and delights in us, as his peculiar *right* and property; that he hath set his *own mark* upon us, as the owner doth upon his sheep. If we are his sheep, he will supply us with every good thing. "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." He will withhold from us nothing that is really serviceable and useful, as to the present life; and he will finally bestow upon us life eternal.—But if the foregoing marks, in *no* sense agree to us, we are none of his sheep,—and if we are not among the number of his sheep,—unhappy men! How truly melancholy is our condition! How dismal and gloomy, will "the valley of the shadow of death" be to us!

This

This naturally leads me to call your attention to a

3d Use, namely, that of exhortation.

IN particular, let me exhort and address sinners to call to mind, how *unfit they* are for death. Can you be prepared for a dying hour, who, perhaps, to this moment, never have bestowed one single cool, calm reflection on the *end* and *design* of life? Know, that the *end*, which *you* have been proposing to yourselves, is unworthy of a reasonable being. You have only been making, in some shape or other, "provision for the flesh." *That God* in whose hand the length of your life is, and whose is the direction of all your ways, you have not glorified. Ah! you have been provoking him to his very face daily. The little concerns of time, the gratification of your irregular passions, you have been eagerly pursuing. For *these* you have been living; while the *all-important* concerns of eternity you have cast *behind* your back. Is this living like *dying* creatures? Is this paying that *attention* to the design of life, which to have done was your duty, your honor, and your interest? Have you not forgotten to acknowledge your *constant* and *necessary* dependance on God and providence? How seldom, except in public, have you bowed your knees before that God "in whom you live, and move, and have your being?" When do you set yourselves to examine how matters stand between you and death; between you and eternity; between God and conscience? Is it possible then, that you can indulge to any pleasing hopes *beyond*

the grave? or can enjoy any solid peace of mind; even on *this* side of it? Die, O my unthinking friends you *must*; but alas! you have made no *proper provision* for that *trying* hour.—And are you resolved to persist in the same tract and course of thoughtless dissipation? What? even though death may be near at hand; may be ready to grasp you in its cold embrace; and, at one fatal throw, to cast your *bodies* into the grave, and fling your *souls* into Hell?—Blessed God! are not these heedless creatures thine own offspring? O take pity on, shew mercy to, the works of thine own hand! enlighten thou their eyes in the knowledge of thee, and of their duty: call them by thy grace; reveal thy son in them: make them thy willing people in the day of thy power. Turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith which is in Jesus Christ.—So will every saint, in this assembly, lift up his prayer to God in the heavens, for your eternal happiness, O ye careless sinners. They would likewise *exhort* you now, at least in this your day, to attend unto the things which belong to your peace.—But let me in their name;—which is infinitely more, in the name of the *great God* himself, beseech you to think on your latter end. Remember, * “that it is “appointed unto all men once to die, and after this the “judgement.” Be exhorted to fly to Christ, your *Zoar*, your only city of *refuge*. Plead for an interest
in

* Heb. ix. 27.

in his precious merits and righteousness. Cry mightily to God, that you may have his holy spirit imparted unto you, and his sacred image implanted in you ; that you may have an interest in him, as your great, and good, and chief shepherd.—Then, nor *life*, with all its attending trials will be tedious ; nor *death*, with all its natural gloom and horrors, will disconcert you. Having lived the life of the righteous, you shall die his Death.—Let me exhort us *all* to be getting ready for our great and last change. For this purpose, let us close with Christ on his own most gracious terms. Let us receive and embrace him in all his characters, and offices. Let us plead, that “ he may be made of “ God unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

BESIDES, let us often be thinking on the *instability* of life ; on its precarious tenure. Had we any thing *interesting* before us, whether pleasing or alarming, it would often, in spite of ourselves, intrude itself into our thoughts. And would it not be our wisdom and interest, often to be turning our thoughts toward *death* ? Hereby it would become more familiar ; and its terrors in some good degree, would be removed. My christian friends, if we would wish to make a dying bed, a *soft* and *easy* one, let us not only cordially accept of God in Christ, as our father, friend, and shepherd, as our portion and happiness ; but also frequently *call death to mind*.—Let us by a life of faith and piety, “ by a patient continuance in well doing,” in humble dependance on the help of the spirit, be preparing for

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our removal. Let us * “be like men who wait for
 “ their Lord, when he shall return from the wedding,
 “ with our loins girded, and our lamps burning, that
 “ whenever he shall knock for admittance, he may find
 “ us ready. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord
 “ when he cometh, shall find *so doing* :” *so watchful, so*
wakeful. If we are *thus* happy, it will mean but little,
when, where, or how, we make our exit out of life ;
 for we shall enter into another and a better world, even
 into an heavenly, where we shall be for ever with the
 Lord.

FINALLY, let me add a word of comfort to all
 God’s people. Indeed, my christian brethren, you
must pass through this dark valley : but you shall be
 conveyed, in perfect safety, to the other side of it.
 Jordan’s deep and strong current shall not so carry you
 down, as that you shall rise no more.—*Sink*, it is true,
 our *mortal* part must in this *fatal* river. Be it so ;
 blessed be God that even *this* shall hereafter however
 arise, and put on a blooming, a glorious, appearance ;
 shall be clothed with the glories of *immortal* youth and
 vigor. † “ Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and
 “ it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know
 “ that, when *he* shall appear, we shall be *like* him, for
 “ we shall see him as he is.” “ He shall change this
 “ *vile* body,” this humiliation body, “ that it may
 “ be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according
 “ to the working whereby he is able to subdue all
 things

* Vide Luke xii. 35, 36, 37. † 1 John iii. 2.

“ things unto himself.” Transporting, animating hope this ! And then, as for our *immortal* part, the spirit, it shall be attended by some guardian angel, and take up its delightful abode in the immediate presence of God, and of the Lamb. The prospects of such a felicity cannot but afford, to real faints, the most sublime pleasure, especially at *those* seasons when faith and hope are strong and lively.—“ Wherefore comfort yourselves, and one another with these and such like words.”

AND when we can, through infinite mercy, follow the dying part of our deceased relatives and friends to the grave, with minds full of such delightful hopes, how singular must be our satisfaction ! how exquisite the joy ! And with such thoughts we may, with the greatest degree of *moral certainty*, think on the *memory* of our dear deceased relative and friend. Whose character I would now attend to ; (for something will be expected to be said,) and I would mention nothing in it but what I believe to be true ; for often the sculptured tomb, and the fulsome panegyric, contain nothing but a heap of lies and falsehoods.

FROM a child, like Timothy, she knew the holy scriptures ; and in younger life, though *young* even at death, it is with the highest pleasure, that the Preacher, from good information, can say, she was sensible that she received the *first* serious impressions, when attending a neighbouring society of christians ; of the church in which, she was afterwards a worthy member. This was something extraordinary ; for in religious families,
as

as hers was, it is generally found, that conversion-work is both begun, and carried on, by *slow, silent, and imperceptible* degrees.

As to her *religious sentiments*; these were strictly what are stiled *evangelical*; and which constitute that pure form of doctrine, which was held by our first reformers. But orthodoxy is far from being the *test* of vital, and inward christianity. Therefore to *sound* principles, she added a *holy* and *heavenly* life. In every *relation* she was a valuable person, a most *affectionate* child, an *obliging* neighbour, *tender* of characters; a *sincere* and *cordial* friend; the *best* of wives, and parents; and a *kind* mistress. The tender and kind affections, she possessed in a very *high* degree. She had *feelings* truly delicate. Those who repaid her kindnesses with ingratitude, she pitied; forgave; and, if occasion should afterward present itself, even to them she would cheerfully give her advice and assistance.

If you consider her as a *christian*; she was one of superior worth. Like Enoch, she walked with God. Those who knew her best, must know, that her life was a picture of *vital* religion. I do not however maintain that she was free from imperfections; no; ("for
" there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good,
" and sinneth not.") But there were few who were either more *sensible* of their imperfections, then she was of hers, or more *humbled* under a sense of them. Looking on herself " as not having already attained; she
" pressed after" a farther increase of christian and moral

ral graces : in two of which, not much attended to, she peculiarly excelled,—christian *prudence*,—and *sympathy*. She had *tender* feelings for the distressed of others. She was a person, my brethren, as a great part of you must know, of strong natural parts, of sterling sense, and of distinguished piety and virtue.

IF we attend her to her *trying* hours, (and she had many hours of much bodily weaknesses,) and more especially to her *dying* hour ; through the *whole*, and particularly in the *last*, *resignation* to the will of her God and Father, christian *fortitude* and *patience*, were to be heard from, and seen in her behaviour.

ONCE more, permit me to attend to her faith in, and love of the Lord Jesus Christ, and her love of God. Christ was her *glory* and her honor ; her boast in time, and will be her *bliss* throughout eternity, On his precious merits and righteousness she *entirely* depended : on these she relied for her future bright robes, and triumphant palms. ‘ *These*’ said she to the Preacher, ‘ are my *only* hope and joy. Except *these*, ‘ I have nothing to rely on.’ Thus she complied with her Lord’s counsel, § “ when ye shall have done “ all those things which are commanded you,” (and through grace she had done much,) “ say, we are “ unprofitable servants : we have done that which was “ our duty to do,” and no more. Thus having walked with God by a holy, humble, useful and pious life, she entered into, and *walked* through the valley of the

the shadow of death, and *feared* no evil. With christian serenity and composure, she met the last enemy; and is now above his reach. She regrets not *now*, that he conquered; that he brought down her clay tabernacle, and laid it in the silent dust. The immortal spirit now exults: now she sees face to face, and knoweth even as she is known. * From her present high and exalted station, were it permitted her to address *you*, O you, her *once* happy husband; you, her once much esteemed and beloved parents, and other relatives; perhaps, she might address you in some such words as these.—

‘ DRY up your tears; I am happy; the labors of
 ‘ my life are now more than abundantly repaid: re-
 ‘ paid through rich and free mercy. Be comforted.—
 ‘ God, even my God and Father, and yours too in
 ‘ Christ, will stand by you. Still depend on his grace.
 ‘ Trust his power, look to his mercy; walk in the way
 ‘ of his precepts: and fear not but that you shall join
 ‘ me, and ten thousand times ten thousand, who, as I
 ‘ have done, have washed their robes, and made them
 ‘ white

* SOME may be apt to think that Mrs. Philipps’ character is drawn out to an undue length. In reply permit me to say; that, though I am no friend to encomiums on the dead INDISCRIMINATELY; to inlarge however on such characters as are distinguished for PIETY, GOOD SENSE and BENEVOLENCE, is doing not only justice to their memories, but it may also be very useful to surviving friends and relatives. To the pious part of whom it will both afford comfort, and be an incentive to a nearer imitation of those whom they so much esteemed. To those of them who are of a different character, through the blessing of God, it may be peculiarly serviceable, in obliging them to CHANGE their present conduct, so unlike THEIRS whose company they once enjoyed, but shall enjoy no more for ever, unless they become IMITATORS of their faith and piety.

‘ white in the blood of the Lamb. Be strong, be of
 ‘ good courage, fight the good fight of faith ; and thus
 ‘ lay hold on eternal life. Thus *live* and you shall *die*
 ‘ in peace. Be comforted ; we shall meet again. Yes ;
 ‘ the day is drawing on, when we shall meet *never*
 ‘ more to be parted ; and shall in sweetest concert sing
 ‘ the praises of God, and the Lamb throughout the
 ‘ endless ages of eternity.

WERE she supposed to address her friends and neighbours at *large* in the congregation, she might thus bespeak their serious attention.

‘ MANY of you are my brethren in Christ. With
 ‘ religious pleasure I have joined with you in solemn
 ‘ acts of devotion, we have mingled our prayers, our
 ‘ praises, our tears together. *You*, I also shall meet
 ‘ again. But O, how much changed for the better !
 ‘ There will be no tears, no weaknesses, no imperfec-
 ‘ tions then in our acts of devotion, as once there were
 ‘ in our most solemn services. All tears shall *then* be
 ‘ wiped away from your eyes, as they are now from
 ‘ mine.—But as for others of you,—ah ! how I
 ‘ once wept over you ; how I pitied your state, and
 ‘ prayed for your conversion ! Be advised, now at
 ‘ last, to consider your latter end. Above all things,
 ‘ be concerned to have Christ formed within you ; to
 ‘ get an interest in his precious death and merits ; to
 ‘ have your hearts and lives conformable to his sacred
 ‘ image. Pray, O pray that you may become new
 ‘ creatures. Be *holy*, and you shall certainly be *happy*.
 ‘ Know that there is another world, and that none but
 ‘ holy and renewed souls can be admitted into the so-
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'ciety of the blessed. Remember that you are mortal,
'and prepare for a dying hour.' "O that you may
"be wise ; that you would understand this, that you
"would consider your latter end."

FROM the whole, my brethren, let us learn to walk
with God, by a life of faith and holiness. Let us be
convinced of the necessity of complying with the offers
of salvation by Christ ; of treading in his steps, of mak-
ing choice of God as our shepherd ; in a word, of liv-
ing as frail, mortal, yet accountable creatures ought
to do. Then it is to be hoped, that when we come to
"walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we
"shall fear no evil," because God as our shepherd,
will be with us. "His rod and staff they shall com-
"fort us."

MAY I now be permitted to say, that I sincerely
sympathize with the distressed relatives. Especially I feel
for you, my dear brother, and for her afflicted parents. But
let a consideration of her *holy* life, and *comfortable* death be
your support. May the Providence be blessed to pro-
mote both your best interests and ours ! May her
motherless child live, and be an ornament to religion !

To conclude the whole, first in the words of the
Psalmist. * "Mark the perfect man ; and behold
"the upright : for the *end* of that man is *peace*."
And then, in the words of the Apostle. † "And we
"desire that every one of you do shew the *same* dili-
"gence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end :
"that ye be not slothful, but followers of them, who
"through *faith* and *patience* inherit the promises.
Amen.

F I N I S.

* Psa. xxxvii. 37.

† Heb. vi. 11, 12.

